

Engineering Heritage Australia Bulletin: #4

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The Convict Trail

For readers who aren't familiar with it, the Great North Road, or to give it its common name, the Convict Trail, is the 240 km convict-built road that was constructed between 1826 and 1834 by convicts, to provide an overland route between Sydney and the Hunter Valley. At the time it was the largest public work yet undertaken in the colony and remains one of the major engineering feats of Australia's convict era.

To conserve, protect and maintain it, the Convict Trail Project was initiated in 1990, and draws support from volunteers and the government. A paper on the Project was presented by its Chair and instigator Paul Budde, to the 2005 engineering heritage conference in Sydney.

In 2001 the Great North Road was declared a National Engineering Landmark, and it was one of the 11 sites included in the Australian Convict Sites that were placed on the World Heritage List in July 2010.



Attached is the August issue of the Convict Trail Project newsletter. Its website is <https://www.convicttrail.com.au/>; the home page includes a box for signing up for the newsletter.

NSW Environment Awards

Nominations for the NSW Environment Awards for 2020-21 are now open, with nominations closing on 23 October; there are seven categories - see **attached**.

The ARHSnsw Photo Collection

Further to the post in Bulletin #3, Engineering Heritage Sydney committee member Bill Phippen has another role in engineering heritage as volunteer manager of the photo collection of the Australian Railway Historical Society, NSW Division.

The collection has about 900,000 images, virtually all scanned, and at the time of writing, 674,212 fully catalogued and searchable. The physical prints, negatives, slides and glass plates are housed in a purpose-built environmentally-controlled storeroom, protected against fire by an inert gas system.

The resource necessarily has a bias towards NSW but includes large numbers of photos from every state. The close correspondence of railways with engineering means that a large proportion of the collection is relevant to engineering heritage.

The Society has made great efforts lately to include within its photo data base the official State Rail Authority Reference Photo Collection (NRS 17420) held by NSW State Archives and

Records (32,400 images) and the collection held by the Sydney Tram Museum (62,000 images).

A sophisticated program allows search by location, line, photographer, locomotive, vehicle, state, date, keyword, words in the title, or by any combination of these parameters. Images which satisfy the details entered are displayed as thumbnails for rapid perusal and selection.

Attached is an image of the photo data base search page, set up to search for images of the Sydney Harbour Bridge taken in 1928 and which contains the word 'Bradfield' in the title - it yielded two hits after hitting the 'Show' button. **Also attached**, is an image of the search result with one of the images superimposed. This image is from the Sydney Harbour Bridge Albums held by NSW State Archives and Records. While the original is not held by the Society, the search identifies where it may be located. The thumbnail is derived from the NSW State Archives and Records website.

At present the search must be made at the Society's premises in Alexandria, Sydney, though it is proposed to migrate at least part of the capacity to an internet-based search engine soon, as resources permit.

Donations of images in any format are always welcome.

Access may be made to the collection through Railway Archives manager James Dalton, James.Dalton@arhsnsw.com.au

The Timber Truss Road Bridges of NSW

The Timber Truss Bridge Book is now on-line at <https://roads-waterways.transport.nsw.gov.au/about/environment/protecting-heritage/timber-truss-bridge/chapter-1.html>

The Ewing Stadialtimeter - a great Australian invention but just too late.

Going through his storage while house-bound due to Covid, Max Underhill has come across an undated letter from E. Esdaile & Sons offering a 'Stadialtimeter' for £100 plus 12.5% sales tax. It is understood the instrument was developed by Ewing in WA about the mid 1950's, was sent to the UK for testing, and was subsequently manufactured by Hilger & Watts Ltd, England; reports on it appeared in the Survey Magazines around 1966.

The Ewing Stadialtimeter, was like a cylindric slide rule fitted to the side of a theodolite; it was reported to be extremely efficient. However the timing for a manual/mechanical measuring/calculating tool invention, was unfortunate as this was when electronic calculators emerged.

Has anyone used one of these?



NSW Heritage Act Review: Engineers Australia's Appearance before the Standing Committee

Submissions to the Review (see Bulletin #1) have closed, and those who made submissions have been invited to appear before the Standing Committee of the NSW Parliament.

Neil Hogg, who appeared on 13 August on behalf of EA, has reported there was an interest in movable heritage and was asked what could be done to improve its protection. He also gained the impression there is a unanimous agreement that aboriginal heritage is not receiving the attention it deserves and requires urgent attention.

Neil's opening statement to the Committee is attached.

Do you have news, information, bright ideas, issues of concern that would interest and be helpful to others? If you do, would you be willing to share, by sending them to Michael at m.clarke32@optusnet.com.au for inclusion in the next Bulletin; we have had many appreciative responses to earlier editions, but we would like more Australia-wide content.

Frank Johnson
Chair, Engineering Heritage Sydney